This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

THE CERTAINTY OF CHRISTIANITY

101 . a.
40.

600094690Y

THE CERTAINTY OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE CERTAINTY

OF

CHRISTIANITY;

A SKETCH.

BY A LAYMAN.

"En illa, illa, quam sæpe sperastis, libertas."—SALLUST.

EDINBURGH: THOMAS CONSTABLE AND CO.
HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO., LONDON.
JAMES M'GLASHAN, DUBLIN.
MDCCCLIV.

101. a. 40.

EDINBURGH : T. CONSTABLE, PRINTER TO HER MAJESTY.

THE CERTAINTY OF CHRISTIANITY.

It has been a difficulty with authors treating of the evidences of Christianity, to know how far they were fairly entitled to refer to the writings of the New Testament.[1] On the one hand, it might be said that this would be to reason in a circle, since possibly to some extent, now inappreciable, partisanship may have affected them. Yet, on the other hand, it would seem to be a very unreasonable thing to discard the testimony of those whose own conversion gave the strongest of all proofs of their convictions; the more so, as their evidence has since been corroborated in a number of minute particulars, and to a degree altogether unprecedented.

The object of this little sketch is to present to the reader a view of the Evidences which steers quite clear of this difficulty,—and, so far, it may claim the praise perhaps of some novelty.

We would premise that few points are so clear

and full of proof, as the high antiquity of the Books of the Old Testament. They were known to Ptolemy Philometor,[2] who died 146 years before Christ, and probably to Alexander the Great;[3] and many years afterwards, we find the Books of Moses mentioned by Juvenal.[4] But a simpler, and, at the same time, quite as satisfactory an evidence of their great antiquity, is the reverence which they command even to this day, alike with Jew and Christian. They must have existed, therefore, before those two great sects parted company; or, in other words, before the time of our Saviour. For, if we were to suppose them penned at any later period, when Jew and Christian had come to have little in common but their deep-rooted enmities, it is plain that if they had found acceptance with the one sect, it must have been to be rejected by the other. So, by the admission of both the parties, we have the Jewish prophecies extant at a period preceding, to say the least, the date of Christianity. Then years roll by—centuries, we might say,—when there appears, in another land, another class of writings of a different kind entirely—the Roman Classics. Now, we hope to shew, that if on the one hand the Jewish writings were to be perused now by any intelligent reader, and he should turn next to the pages of the heathen authors of Rome, he would find an accordance between the predictions of the one, and the events recorded in the other, altogether wonderful; and when he reflected on the necessarily undesigned character of this ac-

cordance, seeing that both the predictions and the fulfilment come from the enemies of our religion, it is difficult to say where his convictions might stop. Probably not before believing that the story of Christ's life, however marvellous, must be true, and that He was indeed the Son of God, visiting our earth on a mission of peace and love, to confirm the hope of eternal life to all who should, in after ages, become His friends and followers.

What is new in this view of the Christian evidences is, that it appeals to the enemies alone of Christianity, as the authorities, and rests no more upon the New Testament than if it did not exist. Doubtless, our knowledge of the details of Christ's life and teaching, would be scanty enough without the New Testament to refer to; yet we hope to shew, that for all the great outlines of His history —the *scene* of His labours, the *time* of His appearance, *His violent end, His Divinity*, and *the doom that overtook His persecutors*—we need no other testimony than the Jewish writings on the one hand, which sounded the note of prophecy to the world ages before He came, and the Pagan authors of Rome on the other, who quite unconsciously have given us, as we shall find, its fulfilment.

I. The first prediction we would consider under this point of view, regards *the place* of Christ's appearing in.

That place was Judea. We read in Isaiah ii. 3, 4.—"*Out of Zion* shall go forth the law and

the word of the Lord *from Jerusalem*, and *He* shall judge among the nations." Again, we read in Isaiah ix. 5, 6,—repeated or rather expanded in xi. 1-10—" For unto us (we quote from Lowth's Translation) a Child is born; unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of the everlasting age, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end; upon the throne of David *and upon his kingdom;* to fix it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, henceforth and for ever: the zeal of Jehovah, God of hosts, will do this." Again, in the noble verses of the fifty-ninth chapter, we read once more—" And the Redeemer shall come *to Zion.*" In Micah, too, iv. 2, we read that " the law shall go forth *of Zion*, and the word of the Lord *from Jerusalem.*" And in the succeeding chapter, v. 2, the prediction is a little more specific, in as much as it names " Bethlehem Ephraita," as the place of the Saviour's birth, little though it was " among the thousands of *Judah.*" We might further refer to Joel ii. 32, and to Zechariah xiv. 8, where it is said that " living waters shall go out *from Jerusalem*,"—but perhaps we have done enough.

Here, then, we have it predicted in the ancient books of the Jews, that one to whom all eyes were turned as the Prince of Peace was to appear in Judea.

It would be to deviate from the line of our

argument to stop here to comment on the prediction, as either a very natural one for Jews to make, or as, on the other hand, a very unpromising one as regarded its fulfilment. These are matters of opinion, on which men may differ; and the course we have chalked out leads us to deal not with views but with facts alone. The prediction then being established, let us next see if the scene of Christ's labours actually was in Judea.

Now this is a point on which no great weight of authority is required, as we are not aware that it ever was disputed. We shall content ourselves with citing the hostile Tacitus, and the still more hostile Lucian. Tacitus, (Ann. xv.,) when relating the burning of Rome in the time of Nero, says, that it was laid to the charge of the Christians; adding, that the author of the sect was Christ, who had been put to death "*by the procurator Pontius Pilate*," and that it was "*in Judea*" that the pestilent superstition (for so he regarded it) had first arisen.

Many years later, in the second century, Lucian (De Morte Peregrini, p. 996. Edit. Bourd.), writing in no friendly spirit, says, "they still worship that great man who was crucified *in Palestine*;" and we know that the Apostate Julian[5] was in the habit of taunting the Christians with "their *Galilean* God."

So, of Judæa's having been the country in which Christ lived and died, there cannot be a doubt; and in this regard He came up to what the Jewish Scriptures had predicted of their Messiah.

II. As respects the *time* when the Saviour was to appear, prophecy does not seem to have been quite so precise as it was in regard to the place. We pass over the well-known prediction about the sceptre departing from Judah, in Genesis xlix. 10, for it has had many[6] meanings assigned it. But much less ambiguous is Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks, or 490 years, in Daniel ix. 24-27. The only difficulty there has been to determine the proper date from which the years must be considered to have run. Some authors, such as Hales,[7] will have them counted from the decree of Cyrus for the rebuilding of the Temple; and others, particularly Bishop Chandler,[8] from the seventh or the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes. But these are unimportant differences; for it is certain that the first view points at Christ's suffering after sixty-two of the weeks had run, as was indeed the case; and that the two others may be said to have taken the whole range of the reign of Tiberius for that event.

Further,—a vague presentiment of some great deliverer may be traced running through most of the Latin classics of the Augustan age,—the faint and confused echo as it were at Rome, of the voice of Jewish prophecy in the far East. On this very interesting subject we may be permitted to say a few words.

Tacitus tells us, that there existed a belief "*derived from the old books of the priests*, that *at that period* a power should come forth *out of Judæa*

which should overcome the world," subjoining in the next sentence, as no friend to Christianity would have done, that these expectations were fulfilled in Vespasian and Titus, although the Jews foolishly applied them to themselves. Suetonius, much to the same effect, mentions the belief as common all over the East; and he too adds, with the same disparaging oversight of Christianity, that it referred to the Roman power, although the deluded Jews saw only their own fortunes prefigured in it and had risen in rebellion.

We may mention another classical authority in support of the expectation. We allude to the strange congratulatory Eclogue of Virgil to his friend Pollio, on the expected birth of a boy. The origin of this very singular poem has been the subject of much controversy. Our own impression is, that it was written (40 B.C.) on the eve of the confinement of Scribonia, the wife of Augustus, when she gave birth to the notorious Julia. But, however this may be, the poem is a spirited and rapturous effusion on the prospect of universal peace and happiness, now that one whom the poet describes as "cara deûm soboles," and "magnum jovis incrementum," was about to be born. It is impossible for any one carefully to read the poem, and not be struck with the wonderful resemblance it bears, even to the very images introduced, to the impassioned strains of Isaiah. The Sybilline Books, the avowed source from which Virgil drew, may have been an Alexandrian version of the prophets. Or Virgil may have wrought into

his song the floating legend which was current in the East, as Suetonius tells us; or it may be he had access to the Hebrew Scriptures or the Septuagint version, in the hands perhaps of Herod, when he[9] came to Rome,—a circumstance the more likely as Pollio and Herod[10] were intimate friends; or he may have found some hints of the expected divinity in the books of the Cumæan Sybil, which we know had been[11] collected by Augustus, and placed in the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill; and this is the more probable, as the compilers of those books might have picked up the Jewish Scriptures in Syria or Egypt, and as one of the Sybils was, according to Ælian[12] and Pausanias, a Jewess. But whatever theory we adopt, and be the history of Virgil's very striking poem what it may, it is enough that in his day, and before the birth of Christ, (for Virgil[13] died at the age of fifty-two, eighteen years before the birth of our Saviour,) men were looking out wistfully though vaguely for some expected one, the harbinger of peace and love, and who should restore once more the blessings of the golden age.

But further still;—throughout the writings of Cicero, Sallust, Suetonius, Quintilian, Dion Cassius, Tacitus, Plutarch, and Josephus, it would be possible to point out allusions to this the engrossing expectation of the day. And many were the abuses made of it,[14]—at one time by Nero, according to Suetonius,—at another by Otho, as Tacitus informs us. So late even as the reign of Vespasian, it had a hold on the popular mind; and that

emperor was so impressed with the belief, that the Sybilline books predicted a king, that he[15] was bent, after taking Jerusalem, on destroying every person who could claim kindred with the royal line of David, in order that in himself, and in no one else, the prediction might be fulfilled.

However precise, therefore, we have found Daniel, under any construction, to have been as regarded the time of the Saviour's advent, it must have been otherwise, it should seem, with the Sybilline books, or Virgil would not have been premature with his lay, and Vespasian too late with his false hopes.[16] Still, unquestionably, everywhere, at Rome and in Judæa, and much about the true time, a whisper ran of some great one expected, and—

> "Kings sate still with awful eye,
> As if they surely knew their Sovereign Lord was by."

How answered the event to the expectation? Let us see.

Tacitus (Ann. 15), in relating the burning of Rome, and its being falsely imputed to the Christians, goes on to say, that "the author of that sect was Christ, who *in the reign of Tiberius* was punished with death by the Procurator Pontius Pilate." And Suetonius, (Nero, chap. 16,) after detailing the sufferings of the Christians under Nero, adds in explanation, that they were "a sort of people addicted to a new and mischievous superstition." Now there is a double significancy in the term "new." It marks the sect as one at that

time of recent origin, which bears on our present argument; and it distinguishes it besides from the Jews, whose existence and tenets were neither of them new to the Romans.

The accordance is thus complete between the anticipations of the Jewish prophets and the statements of the heathen historians. Christ was to appear and suffer in the reign of Tiberius,—and He did so.

III. This was not all.—The Jewish prophets ventured also to predict the nature of His death, and that a rather unusual one. For neither in the field at the head of a trusty band, nor in a city tumult, nor in confinement or retirement, nor on a throne, nor in obscurity and in some unknown way, was Christ, they said, to die,—but by the sentence of a judge.

The prediction is to be found in various parts of the Old Testament. In Isaiah, for instance, liii. 8, we read, "He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare His generation? for He was *cut out of the land of the living;* for the transgression of my people was He *stricken.*" Bishop Lowth translates what is rendered here "from prison and from judgment," "*by an oppressive judgment He was taken off;*" and the word "stricken" he makes "*judicially* stricken to death." We might refer also to Daniel ix. 26, and Zechariah xii. 10, both indicating a violent end, though without particularizing the judicial character of it like Isaiah.

Now, in perfect harmony with these predictions, we find Tacitus mentioning Christ as having been punished with death (supplicio affectus) "*by the Procurator* Pilate." And, after him, all the pagan authors treat the fact as notorious. Lucian we have had occasion already to quote as noticing "that great man *who was crucified* in Palestine;" and other authorities, such as Celsus and Arnobius, with many more, might easily be referred to.

IV. And who was he that in Judæa, and in the time of Tiberius, was to appear and suffer such ignominy? The old Jewish books said it was to be no other than the Maker and Preserver of the Universe, God himself,[17] personal on the earth. If we turn, for instance, to Isaiah ix. 6, 7, and xi., we find that the child to be born is described as "*the mighty God, the everlasting Father*, the Prince of Peace;" and it is announced that "of the increase of His government and power there shall be no end upon the House of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, *from henceforth even for ever.*" In Micah, again, v. 2, he who is foretold is the "ruler in Israel, *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*" And in Zechariah there are many passages to the same effect. Thus, in Zech. vi. 12, 13, we read, "Behold the man whose name is the Branch; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build

the temple of the Lord; and *he shall bear the glory*, and shall sit and rule upon *his* throne; and he shall be a priest upon *his* throne; and the council of peace shall be between them both," that is, between the predicted one and the Lord. Some Jewish commentators, embarrassed with this prediction, have striven to apply to Zerubbabel what is said of his ruling on the throne; but Zerubbabel never ruled in Jerusalem; and after building the temple, he returned to Babylon.[18] Besides, it will not escape notice that the Temple was not to be his own, but the Temple *of the Lord*, and on *his* throne was he to sit. In chapter xii. 10, the Father and the Son are identified in a very striking and peculiar way. We read, "they shall look on *me* whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for *him*, as one mourneth for an only son." And in chapter xiii., still more emphatically,—"Awake, O sword, against *my* shepherd, and against the man *that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts.*" Jeremiah, too, xxiii. 6, might be referred to, but we need not dwell longer on this point.

These are the writings of a very early age which we have been quoting. The Sybilline books, of a much later day, have long since perished. Yet of these we have traces in the classical authors; and very clear it is that they were borrowers from the Jewish prophets, even as regarded the divine nature of the expected one. Judging from them, they spoke of the advent of one of high destiny, and of highest origin, coming to rule in peace over a boundless empire; and these promises were

the foundation, as we have found, of the hopes of more than one Roman emperor, and the germ of Virgil's "Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto," and of his "Cara deûm Soboles," "Magnum Jovis incrementum," in the remarkable Eclogue already alluded to. It would thus appear that it was from the old tissue of the web of Jewish prophecy, that the Sybil plucked the golden threads which Virgil afterwards wove into his rich and figured tapestry. But Virgil was in his grave, and had been so many years, when the tapestry stirred with life, and the God depicted on it actually came.

Having had these proofs,—Roman and Jewish,—of the expectation of a Divinity, turn we now to its fulfilment.

We confess that within the whole compass of history, we have met with nothing so wonderful as what we are now to advert to; and the information comes, it will be kept in mind, from the declared foes of Christianity. We shall find him who was put to death by the Procurator Pontius Pilate, (these are the words of Tacitus, Ann. xv.) having worship and adoration paid to him,—the startling circumstance of his death, and the ignominy of it, having been powerless to shake the faith in his Godhead, so divine in power, beneficence, and bearing, must the living Christ have been.

The earliest mention, in any heathen author, of worship paid to Jesus Christ, is to be found in Pliny's celebrated letter; and it carries us back to usages within half a century of the crucifixion. Pliny, writing A.D. 104, or as Basnage more cor-

rectly supposes, A.D. 110, and so about sixty-seven years after our Lord's death, and deriving his information, as he tells us, in part from one whose memory went back twenty years,—or, in other words, Pliny, describing the state of things forty-seven years after the resurrection, mentions that the Christians of Bithynia were wont to meet together in the morning, and sing a hymn to Christ, "Carmenque Christo *quasi Deo* canere."

Then, somewhat later, Celsus represents the great mass of Christians, about the year 140, as believing in the divinity of Christ. "He objects against us," says[19] Origen, "I know not how often, respecting Jesus, that we consider him as God with a mortal body." Celsus, indeed, repeatedly speaks of Christ as the God of Christians;[20] affirms that he is worshipped by them; alludes to the account of his miraculous conception; observes that he is called the Word; says that the place is shewn where Christ, "who is worshipped by Christians," is born; and ridicules their inconsistency in laughing at the worshippers of Jupiter, whose tomb was shown in Crete, while they worship as God a man who was buried in Palestine.

In the same way Lucian, A.D. 170, notices derisively the homage paid to Christ; and the orator Libanius commends Porphyry and Julian for confuting the folly of a sect, "which styled a dead man of Palestine God, and the Son of God." Lastly, we can gather from Arnobius, A.D. 303, that the heathens considered the Christians as

odious to the gods; and the worship offered to Christ as God, is assigned as the reason. "The gods," to quote his words, "are not incensed at you because you worship the Omnipotent God, but because you maintain him to have been God, who was born a mortal man, and (what is infamous even with the vilest persons) put to death by crucifixion; and *believe him to be still living, and worship him with daily prayers.*" This was the complaint which Celsus had made a century and a-half before. "If," said he, "these people worshipped no other but one God, they might perhaps have some ground for attacking the others; but now they pay superstitious honours to this man, who lately appeared, and yet they imagine that they do not offend God if his servant also be worshipped."[21]

From these various testimonies all concurring, and all indisposed to Christianity, it clearly appears, that soon after the crucifixion, the converts of Bithynia paid divine honours to Christ as God, and that as years rolled on there was no abatement in the zeal and devotion of his followers. Spite of his death, they were constant in the faith that he who had suffered was yet no other than the Great God himself, of quite untarnished glory and of still unconquered might.

We know not that we could add anything in the way of comment on this very striking passage in the world's history. It stands alone. That one who had been put to death should be revered as God, this has happened but once. No other in-

stance is to be found in ancient or in modern history. And that this should have been predicted also, with the time and the place marked out, completes and crowns the marvel.

V. The fate of the Jewish nation since their rejection of our Saviour, has been very peculiar, and in some measure misunderstood. The tribe of the weary heart and wandering foot has found its way into every land almost on which the sun shines, and its dispersion is familiar to every one as a theme at school; without a territory of its own, it forms the chance population of other states. But we must remember that the wanderings of the Jews can be traced back into a very remote antiquity. They were the consequences of more than one captivity, and perhaps of a national bias to varied life and commerce. And hence, long before the time of our Saviour,[22] there were Jews settled in every country of the East,—in the Isles of Greece as well as in[23] Spain, and on the banks both of the Nile and the Euphrates.

It is not then their exile in foreign lands that we would remark on here, as it was nothing new, nor yet on the destruction of their nationality, for this has been the fate of many a tribe besides, from the Lycians and the Etruscans of the old world to the Aztecs of the new. But what is to be said, if we find it was just when the guilt of the Jews was at its height, that their aggravated sufferings began, and that those who gazed on the dying agonies of our Saviour, lived to see the

Temple a mass of ruins, and the whole nation in exile,—an exile which has had no end? Yet so it was. The wars of Titus came first, which spoiled the Temple of its glories, and laid it in the dust;[24] and within a few short years there followed Hadrian's[25] frightful butcheries, and a new city for a colony of the strangers rose on the spot where Jerusalem had stood. *Ever since*, down to the present hour, *there has been no nation of the Jews anywhere on the earth, with a country and a policy of their own.*[26] In the very words of the prophets, (2 Samuel vii. 10, and Jeremiah vii. 14,) who always linked their fortunes with their temple's, they have ceased "to dwell in a place of their own" ever since it fell; and what was formerly their country has been a province alternately of Rome, of Persia, of Egypt, and of Turkey, for the last eighteen centuries. During several years, indeed, there was a patriarch at Tiberias,[27] and subsequently the Talmud of Babylon gave the law in religious matters to the whole race of Israel. But civil power the Jews never knew in any form after the times of Titus and Hadrian, unless indeed in subordination to some foreign sway, as in the case of their Archons and Ethnarchs.[28]

How complete this extinction of the Jews as a nation, and, in connexion with guilt, how very striking. The peculiarity of their case is not so much that they were dispersed, but that they fell *at once*, and also *for ever*, from a nation to outlaws, banded together here and there,—their fate following close upon their guilt, so close that there

were doubtless old men alive who could tell the tale of both.

It would be easy to cite authorities of all kinds, Jewish and Roman, for the destructive wars to which we have alluded, and their consequences. But both are so well known, that we think it quite unnecessary. Why quote Josephus and Tacitus, when every stranger who visits Rome may see graven upon the arch of Titus the sacred vessels of the Temple, which were carried off by the Roman soldiers as the spoils of their victory; and, turn his steps next where he may, he comes everywhere upon the outcast race, whose wanderings cannot indeed be said to have commenced then, but whose wanderings, without a home to return to, certainly may. If before they were as birds whose flight was often far from the nest, they have since been as birds whose nest has been pulled down and strewed to the winds.

Now all this was predicted in Jewish prophecy. We have it in the sacred writings of the Jews themselves, as we shall now see.

Among the various prophecies which ushered in and foretold the changes in the chequered history of the race, we may observe some which had reference probably to the Assyrian conquest and the Babylonish captivity, and others expressly to the time of our Lord. It is with the latter alone that we have to do here. And yet it would be wrong to pass the others by altogether; for, along with the distinct and specific notice of certain events which were to happen, and which did happen,

they occasionally depict in a general way some leading peculiarity in Jewish history, that should overrule and attend all their destinies. Of this nature is a prediction in Ezekiel vi. 8, and one in Amos ix. 9. The words of Amos are these:— "For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve; yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth." The words "yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth," would seem to imply, that the Jews scattered everywhere should yet neither perish as some seeds do, nor take root and establish themselves as happens with others. It is remarkable that there is nothing in the terms of the prediction that limits it to any particular period. On the contrary, it takes the whole range of time,—and up to the present day it has known no check. So long indeed as the Temple stood, which rallied the Jews together periodically wheresoever dispersed, that venerated shrine and its services must have helped to keep them from sinking absorbed and lost in other nations. But when it fell, we should hardly have expected them to have had any heart longer for a marked isolated existence, "baited with the rabble's curse." Yet this feverish life they have endured, and, what was fully as improbable, have been permitted to endure; and thus they have never "fallen upon the earth," either to perish or to prosper. Had their fate differed, and their course taken either direction, all we can say is, that they would not have remained "an instruction and an astonish-

ment"[29] to other nations. For, peopling a province they would have been like other tribes and undistinguished, and disappearing altogether they would have been unseen, perhaps unremembered. But as it is, their fate has been palpable as well as peculiar; and, we might add, their return to their own land one day has continued to be possible.

After this little digression, let us turn now to those prophecies which more immediately concern us,—of a different date, and of unambiguous reference to our Lord. We begin with Zechariah xiii. 7. It runs thus,—"Awake, O sword, against thy shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." The first part of this verse very clearly points at the sufferings of the Great Shepherd, whom the Lord of hosts disdains not to call his equal,—"my fellow." The latter clause, again, predicts the scattering of the sheep, (the common[30] phrase for Israel,) *as the consequence* of their smiting the shepherd. To Jews, with their habits of wandering, it would have been an idle thing to predict their dispersion; and therefore something new in this dispersion, to make it more signal than any that had gone before, must clearly have been meant. Now, need we say that *ceasing for ever* to have a land of their own, with the demolition of the venerable pile round which their ruined fortunes had occasionally rallied before but never since, is the marked peculiarity in the last dispersion of the

Jews. And, precisely as the prophecy foretold, the smiting of the shepherd was followed by the scattering of the sheep. The prediction and the event tallied with perfect accuracy;—and yet, curiously enough, it came about in a way which makes it impossible that the prediction should have contributed in the slightest degree to the result. For it was not Christian hands that desecrated and destroyed the Temple.[31] The Romans, exasperated by the rising of the Jews in Egypt, Cyprus, and Mesopotamia, did the deed,—agreeably, as we shall find, to another prophecy; and as if to mark the hand of Providence in it all, at the very time when the Jews were sent on this their last long exile, the Christians were allowed to remain unmolested within the walls of the new city (of Ælia) which rose from among the ruins of Jerusalem.[32]

But we must hasten to other prophecies, which likewise bore upon those times. In Daniel ix. 26, we read, "And after three score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and *the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.*" Anything more explicit we cannot conceive. It requires no comment. The Messiah was to come and be cut off, and the city and temple were to be laid low by a stranger prince and his people.

Lastly, there occurs a passage in Isaiah lxv. 9-15, to which we have to beg our reader's attention. "And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my

mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me. But ye are they that forsake the Lord, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink-offering unto that number. Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name." There cannot be a doubt, as Lowth remarks, that this chapter, and the succeeding one, "manifestly relate to the calling of the Gentiles, the establishment of the Christian dispensation, and *the reprobation of the apostate Jews, and their destruction executed by the Romans.*"

Here our sketch might close. It is true we could add to the five cases of prophecy which we have selected several others. There is the case of Petra, for instance, which was a flourishing town,

a mart of commerce, with a mint of its own, in the time of Hadrian, and much later too.[33] It was besieged by Trajan;[34]—and Strabo gives us some account of its government on information derived from his friend Athenodorus[35] of Tarsus, Augustus's tutor, who visited the Idumæan capital. Damascus and Gaza have stood as well as London[36] and Athens. Why should Petra have fallen, and fallen too no one can say how or when? Another case we might add likewise, is the predicted career and triumph of Christianity, as foretold in Malachi i. 11. How strange that the prophets of the Jews should have predicted its ascendency, and not the ascendency of their own time-honoured exclusive ritual! How strange, too, that alone of all religions its founder perished by a miserable death, and that no other professing to be the Messiah has ever made any way among the Gentiles or in the isles of the West! We might add both of these cases, and many more,—but we refrain. For in sketching out our design, we limited ourselves strictly to matters of fact. The death of Christ at a particular time, and the breaking up of the Jewish nation forthwith, are such, and they do not admit of controversy. But this cannot be said so truly and in the same sense, of the fall of Petra, and the triumphant march of Christianity. These are subjects which are food for reflection and moralizing; but men may see them in different lights, and to some extent they involve opinions as well as facts. There are persons who will tell us, that Petra has passed

away just like other cities which, in their time, flourished, and then were "grated down to dusty nothing." Not that we think this answer a good one; for still, when some have stood and others fallen, who but a prophet could have said which of the fates was to be Petra's? And, again, although there are many things very wonderful in the rise and progress of Christianity, to some of which we have just been alluding,—yet it would be rash to rest on the predicted triumphs of the cross, as a thing accomplished, in the same way as we have felt warranted to rest on the five prophecies regarding our Saviour. Its day is coming rather; this we are entitled to say, for there is light on the hill tops; yet night still lingers over many lands. Only a few years have passed since Christianity found its way into the savannahs of the West, and into the wilds of Siberia. There are pagan tribes even now on this side of the Urals,[37] and of half the world besides the same tale may be told. Yes, and the Koran, with the sword, now rules in some lands where the Bible once had peaceful sway: and Georgia, which owed its Christianity to a beautiful incident which reminds one of Naaman and the little captive girl,[38] has debased it with miserable superstition. Truth is, the tree is only in the leaf, and some branches have withered. But new branches will spring where others have died. The trunk and stem are sound,—and, rising by the waters of life, it will soon repair the injuries of a thousand years; and the weary and the heavy laden of every clime and

colour will doubtless one day repose together beneath its shadow. But it is not so as yet.

Throughout the whole course of this argument of ours, now drawing to a close, the peculiarity has been, that we have got inadvertently from pagan and unfriendly witnesses the fulfilment of the very remarkable course of prophecy relating to Christ, which equally unfriendly Jews had transmitted to us from a remote antiquity. In this we think we have succeeded. Jesus Christ did in every point, even by the testimony of His foes, come up to what had been foretold of Him by the Jewish prophets; and the doom which had been denounced against His persecutors actually overtook them.

Our path, hitherto, has lain through PROPHECY. But now we find ourselves on the borders of a new region, that of MIRACLES.

We use this language, because the fulfilment of prophecy leads us to the miraculous illumination of the prophet's mind who predicted it. It is a case of miracle. Now, miracles occur so seldom and the course of events flows on so evenly in this world that any alleged deviation from it, any cancelling and overturning of the old and acknowledged methods of nature, grates upon the understanding and naturally raises a doubt. And why is this? Unquestionably not because we think God cannot, but because we see he does not, interfere to make the course of things break from their wonted channel, except on the very rarest occasions. We know of one such, at the first introduc-

tion of man, and the other animals, on the stage of existence. The first human beings, it is obvious, must have appeared on the earth full grown, or at least above the age of helpless infancy, or they would have died the death of the Babes in the Wood, as Hugh Miller has somewhere observed; and we may say the same of the other animals. There are many nice questions which geologists have raised, about the constitution of the atmosphere in early times, for it is believed to have changed;[39] and about the successive creation of new races of animals, some of them appearing when others had nearly finished their prescribed course, the infancy of the one being the old age of the other.[40] The question has chiefly regarded the order of the succession. But, apart altogether from such niceties, we are certain that the first burst into being of every tribe, happen when it might in each case, must have been a novelty,—a miracle.

The earth's history is, in this point of view, a thing to ponder on. We can picture to ourselves, how that one day, long ago, the sun rose over a vast solitude of hill and dale, stretching far and wide, silent and uninhabited; and next morning, as the clouds rolled slowly up from the valley and hung at last above the woods, there were to be seen in the clear space far beneath some "birds on the branches warbling." Another morning, ages after, and when the curtain rose that day, there was left to view a dappled creature of the forest, with antlered head erect, gazing with its mate at the rocks and waters. A pleasant change

all this for the old earth. Through many a weary age, the daily sun, making his round, had looked down on a maze of sedges, weltering below at the base of a high wilderness of dark pines and palm-trees; and now, these pretty birds, never cradled in any egg, and this wondering pair, which had had no parents, were in the green places, as by enchantment,—struck into life somehow,—we may say miraculously, for it was a change from all that had been before, and from what has been the way since.

Miracles, then, are not unknown in our history. They happened at least once unquestionably, when the earth received her first guests; and men of feeble minds and faith would do well to think of these things; they would see God's hand in them. And, further, when they find from this little volume of ours, that *for the special purpose of introducing Christianity* God was pleased once more to interfere with the course of things, by illuminating the minds of the prophets of old, bringing in a Second Adam, that they should see its rise and future fortunes afar off, they may deem it only in keeping that He should exercise the same high privilege of miracles when Christ actually came. If the spring had its miracles, as we have found, it is reasonable to suppose that the autumn was not without them. It has been said that they were needed, in order that God might be seen and distinguished among His works, —and this is true. But what we wish to impress is, that the promise of the spring was wasteful

and deceiving, if we could suppose the autumn that followed did not equal it; and the purposes of Him who rules the seasons must have faltered. Varying the metaphor,—when prophets were the heralds, we cannot think that when the King came he had not wherewith he could be distinguished from the throng,—some insignia and marks of royalty; and what could these be but miracles?

And now to conclude: Are we sanguine that this view of Christianity may convince some doubter, or reclaim some wanderer? If men could only be got to part with the old and plausible for the true, we doubt not what would be the result. Yet how few are thus faithful with their reason. In taking a survey of the world around us, it is curious to mark the variety that holds as regards religion. Some persons take it up listlessly, as by inheritance, and know as little of its hopes as of its threatenings. Others, with opportunities of learning all neglected, espouse it warmly but ignorantly, and they receive the praises of the devout, although, if their nativity had been cast in Spain instead of in Britain, we can tell what part they would have played in the Inquisition. It is not for either of these parties that we have written, but for another class altogether,—for patient thinkers, men so earnest that they will thank us for assured grounds of faith, and yet so honest that they will accept no less. We trust that feeling strong in those which we have offered they will rest from their doubting now. Ignorance on many points may still remain for them, as doubt-

less it must do; but they will shew their weakness, not their reason, if they ever let their ignorance disturb their knowledge more.

But faith is not of the intellect entirely, and the Bible places it elsewhere when it speaks of "an evil *heart* of unbelief." Now it would lead us into too long a digression, were we to attempt tracing here the nice ties that connect the head and the heart of man; and so a few words must suffice. There are certain subjects unquestionably which the pure reason has all to itself, such as the mathematics, for a problem in Euclid bears no blossoms. But all narratives of life require a moral sense for the appreciation and perception of their truthfulness, and the finer the sense the more will the reader's spirit "leap out into the story," and will he greet it with the heart. The story of Christ's devoted heroism, and of His love to God and man, will thus rivet the like-minded, on the same principle that a bereaved parent will best enter into the griefs of Rachel weeping for her children, and of the mother in Boccaccio's beautiful tale of the Falcon, "La madre dolorosa, come che piu non aveva;" and that the king's sorrow for the death of Hampden,[41] albeit their banners were floating on opposite heights when he fell, approves itself as nature and truth to the generous and the forgiving, men who can say from the heart, "Brave tears, how excellent is sorrow in an enemy."[42] So far the moral sense acts positively, it fits for the reception of truth. But, more than this, when it is wanting, other influences are

at work unfortunately in the opposite direction, to harden and to blind. And hence vainly will he who harbours any of the vices in his heart expect heavenly faith to come among them. In the same way, the man whose thoughts "go all into the city, and none into the Temple," (to use the beautiful words of Bacon,) we may be pretty sure has his God already in the market-place. In truth, things that engross, whether they be riches or learning or oftener merely Horace's "rerum mediocriter utilium spes," not only shut out other things, but they dull the eye that should see them. And if we would have lively convictions on high and holy things, we must entertain them often and seriously in thought, and in practice seek ever to do the will of God. Merit there will be none in this, for it is our duty and no more; *but it has the promise of increased faith.* Besides, it secures the frequency of solemn thoughts, so necessary for the unseen and eternal sharing fairly with the seen and the temporal; and it will prevent the cold intellect from outgrowing the heart and the affections, as it is apt to do. It gives too a glorious liberty,—a felt independence of men and their different ways of thinking—for

> "Virtue gives herself light;"

and

> "Virtue could see what virtue would,
> Though all were in the flat sea sunk."[48]

Lastly, it insures the taking up of our cross daily, by which in effect life becomes a series of

noble sacrifices, and a triumph over outward ills and our own weak wicked selves.

Yet, seeing that the pleasures of an approving conscience[44] were within the reach even of the heathen, some questions may suggest themselves here, which it were an error to leave unnoticed. And, first of all, it may occur—is this attempt to please an unseen God anything more than what Cicero might have proposed to himself as the rule of his life? Has he not indeed told us, that one day well spent is better than immortality with sin?[45] Again, though it may be a labour of love, is it not still a labour, and will not the thought of self with its imperfections be ever intruding to mar our satisfaction? We can conceive even another question to be put, and it is this:—How should the thought of an unseen God, by being habitually cherished, foster or give rise to the sentiments proper to Christianity? What, in short, is the tie between morality and religion, and where is the key to persons doing God's will "knowing of the doctrine whether it be of God," as we are assured (John vii. 17) will be the case?

Now, with one remark we meet and dismiss all these difficulties: *The* RULING THOUGHT *in every breast must be the God who for our sakes sojourned on our earth eighteen centuries ago*, and left us the record of His love. It is not Cicero's god we must remember and revere, but a better known,—the Friend, the Counsellor, the Saviour of men. The thought of such a God is above

any that Cicero could have known. It is enough to fill the hearts of men so with gratitude, that they will run to do His pleasure out of mere love, without a sense or a design of labour. Musing on what He has done, not on what they are doing, their joy will be that they have Him already as their friend, which is something more than hoping to win His love by acts of theirs. Christ will be to them, not the truth and the life merely, but the way too. And as it has been God's will to be known and cherished as the God who came from heaven to earth to save men; so, in thinking of what His will now is, that they may do it and reap the promised reward of increased faith, they will see it must be the same still. Then the tie between morality and religion will be no more any enigma, for they will love Him *because* He first loved them.

NOTES.

These Notes have startled the author with their unexpected show, now that he has seen them in print, and his first impulse was to suppress them. But as this might disappoint the curious, or persons wishing to prosecute the subject farther, he now gives them. And he would caution the reader against breaking the continuity of the sketch by constantly referring to them, as they occur.

1. Compare Chalmers' Works, iii. 254; and Inglis on Christian Faith, 111.
2. Biographie Universelle, xxxvi. 223 and 229; Chaufpiè, *voce* Onias; Lowth on Isaiah xix. 19; and Horne's Introduction, iii. 245.
3. Josephus Antiq., xi. 8, 4; and Biblical Cyclopedia, ii. 519.
4. Juvenal, 14th Sat., line 102.
5. Milman's History of Christianity, iii. 81.
6. Faber's Eight Dissertations, i. 202.
7. The Illustrated Commentary, on these verses of Daniel.
8. Chandler's Defence, 139; and Davies on Prophecy, 117.
9. Heynè on the 4th Eclogue, i. 94; Biographie Universelle, xx. 271; and Faber's Horæ Mosaicæ, i. 84.
10. Heynè, from Josephus.
11. Faber's Horæ Mosaicæ, i. 79; and Virgil, Æneid, vi. 69.
12. Ælian Var. Hist. lib. xii.; and Pausanias Græc. Descript. Phocic., lib. x. page 631.
13. Dunlop's Roman Literature, iii. 70: and Biog. Univers. *voce* "Virgile."

14. Chandler's Vindication, vol. ii.; and Faber's Eight Dissertations, ii. 55.
15. Burton's History of the First Two Centuries, i. 340, referring to Eusebius.
16. The ruins of the Second Temple are a landmark to us looking back, which men looking forward to the coming of the Messiah could not have seen. The prophets had said he was to come during the existence of the Second Temple, of which, indeed, agreeably to Haggai ii. 9, he was to be the crowning glory. So, of course, its fall was the striking of the clock.

    In this point of view, a peculiar interest attaches to the *Second* Temple. But a question has been raised whether Jesus did not really come to a *Third* Temple, on which we may say a few words. The First Temple, that built by Solomon, stood some 410 years, and was then completely burnt down, and the service put an end to. After a lapse of 50 years, a Second Temple was reared, in the reign of Cyrus, by Zerubbabel, and after many years it shewed symptoms of having suffered from time and the wars of Antiochus Epiphanes. And Herod the Great, to please the people, restored it. In one sense he may be said to have rebuilt it, as the inner temple, or Naos, he completely renewed. (Robinson's Biblical Researches, i. 418 and 427.) But, in as much as this was only a part of the Temple buildings, Josephus and Maimonides always regarded him as having merely repaired the Temple, and so they speak of only two Temples. In this it were wise, we think, to defer to them, as they must have had the best means of knowing. But even if we were to judge for ourselves, we could not well differ from them; for the Temple was only twice *destroyed*, by Nebuchadnezzar and Titus,—the injuries in the wars of Antiochus falling greatly short of destruction. (Chandler's Vindication, i. 276.) In the next place, there was a chasm of 50 years between the First and Second Temple, but none between the second and Herod's. On the contrary, the Temple service went on, and the second was gradually taken down as Herod's made progress. (Davidson on Prophecy, 352; and Kitto's Illust., vii. 240.) It would be wrong too to overlook another consideration.

If we turn to Daniel, ix. 26 and 27, we shall find the desolation predicted to the Second Temple at our Lord's coming described in peculiarly strong terms,—terms that denote utter destruction, beyond repair, and quite inapplicable to the scars of age and the mischief done by Antiochus, which were what Herod remedied. As rather too much prominence has been given to a *Third* Temple in a recent work of great merit, the Biblical Cyclopedia, *voce* "Temple," we have thought the present note might be of use.

17. Justified by Shakspeare's "when he was personal in the Irish war."
18. Kimchi on Zechariah, page 65.
19. Lib. iii. page 135.
20. Wilson on the New Testament, page 356.
21. Do., page 359-361.
22. Milman's History of the Jews, iii. 134, 135; and Conybeare and Howson's Life of St. Paul, i. 18.
23. Forster's Primeval Language, iii. 334; the Cochin Manuscripts are referred to.
24. Milman's Jews, iii. 24 and 68.
25. Smyth's Descriptive Catalogue of Roman Medals, privately printed, p. 106.
26. Davies on Prophecy, 115; and Milman's Jews, iii. 91.
27. Milman's Jews, iii. 201.
28. Do., ii. 66.
29. Ezekiel v. 14, 15, and Deuteronomy xxviii. 64.
30. Kimchi, 171.
31. Milman's Jews, ii. 253, and iii. 24 and 68.
32. Milman's Jews, iii. 124; and his History of Christianity, i. 458.
33. Robinson's Biblical Researches, ii. 575.
34. Keith on Prophecy, 177.
35. Biographie Universelle, xliv. 12.
36. Wright's "The Celt, the Roman, and the Saxon," 32, 95, and 122.
37. Ermann's Siberia, i. 135; and Hill's Siberia, i. 84.
38. Neander's Church History, Bohn's edition, iii. 162.
39. It is the opinion of Brongiart and others, that in the balmy era, when the very rank vegetation which is now entombed in our coal-fields, was in growth, the atmos-

phere probably contained a larger proportion of carbonic acid than it does now.—See Ann. des Sciences Nat., xv. 225; Phillip's Geology, ii. 176; and Humboldt's Cosmos, i. 206, 270, and 290. And it would appear that such an excess of carbonic acid might have been quite compatible with animal life, if the oxygen also was increased.—See Liebig's Letters, page 336; and Faraday's Lectures on the Non-Metallic Elements, p. 267. But whence so peculiar a change in the chemical constitution of the atmosphere? It has occurred to us that a diminution of the surface of the water over the globe, as continents rose up out of the deep, is sufficient to account for it, seeing that water absorbs more of the oxygen and the carbonic acid, than of the nitrogen of the air.—See Gmelin's Chemistry, Cavendish Society edition, ii. 67 and 408. The explanation given by Humboldt, of the larger preponderance of carbonic acid in early times, is a little different. It resolves itself into there having been more numerous volcanic fissures, then unfilled up, which emitted carbonic acid. But this explanation and the one we have ventured to offer are obviously quite compatible with each other, and both causes may have operated.

40. Ansted's Ancient World, page 54; Lord Brougham's Dissertation on Paley, ii. 191; Murchison's Siluria, 5, 461, and 480; Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise; and Hugh Miller's Writings.
41. Lord Nugent's Life of Hampden, ii. 442.
42. From "The False One" of Beaumont and Fletcher.
43. From Spenser and Milton.
44. "La buona compagnia che l'uom francheggia
Sotto l'osbergo del sentirsi pura."—Dante, Infer. xxviii.
45. "Est autem unus dies, bene et ex preceptis tuis actus peccanti immortalitati anteponendus."—Cicero, Tusc. Quæst. lib. v.